RESTORATION REVIEW

A TEST OF LOVE

"Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offense. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in the truth." (1 Cor. 13:4-6, NEB) How in contrast to the Jonahs, who are displeased when their enemies repent! Read the book of Jonah for a study of hatred.

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Volume 9, No. 3 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **March 1967**

HOLY SPIRIT HYSTERIA

That there is a renewal of interest in the Holy Spirit is beyond question. An interesting aspect is how it has effected the various denominations. A psychologist might be able to read something from the diverse effects that the Spirit movement has had upon the different churches.

The Roman Catholics have reacted with a quiet and subtle curiosity, supposing that it might be a good thing for the Protestants, admitting along the way that glossolalia and other spiritual manifestations have always had a part in their church life, however subdued and isolated it might have been. The Episcopalians, who have had a surprising amount of the workings of the Spirit among their priests, have tried to play it cool. They have endeavored to be sophisticated even in this area, and of course tolerant. They seem to have mixed feelings, however. They are made uneasy in the face of so much religious enthusiasm, and yet they are satisfied that their concern for “the sacraments” encourages just such experiences. So they are on tiptoe.

The Presbyterians insist on being scholarly about the whole thing. They are looking at it psychologically, concluding that those who are addicted with the Holy Spirit are in some way disoriented. That their ministry has not been as much effected as some other denominations allows them to be a little more detached. So their’s is the balcony attitude, to use a good ole Presbyterian term. The Disciples of Christ are confused and bewildered by it all, and can hardly believe it when is breaks out among their own ministers, as it has on numerous occasions. It just isn’t like Campbellites to get any kind of Holy Spirit religion, so from sheer lack of experience they do not know how to react. Like the Presbyterians they turn to psychology for an explanation.

The Baptists are as surprised as they are divided in their reactions. They welcome it as a real lift to their programs on college campuses, and see it as a resource of power in their churches. The result is that some churches are moving closer to the pentecostal traditions, while others are cautious about it all. The Pentecostals have, of course, long considered

themselves the *avant garde* in the Spirit movement, but it is having the salutary effect of making them more ecumenically conscious.

If we might top all this off with an evaluation from a European theologian, we can listen to Dr. Hendrikus Berkhof of the University of Leyden in the Netherlands, who spoke recently at the Austin Theological Seminary. He says that God is granting spiritual gifts, including faith healing and speaking in tongues, in order to renew major American denominations. He sees it as a renewal of American churches, such manifestations not now being prominent outside the United States. He points out that our churches have succumbed to the secularism of the world and has been limited by horizontal ideas, by which he means men have been talking to each other rather than to God. He sees the Holy Spirit manifestations as real, as God's way of saving American churches from decay. He warns at the same time that the Holy Spirit movement might become sectarian.

Many responsible Protestant voices are saying about the same thing. They see the movement as a spiritual renaissance, given of God to offset the rise of materialism. Some go so far as to say that it is the only thing that will again make relevant the church's message to the world, and the only thing that will really set the church apart from the world.

Well, what effect has it had upon us in the Church of Christ?

I fear that the long and short of it is that the reaction of our people is one of hysteria. It has been hard for us to stop, look and listen, especially to listen. We are always too vocal, supposing that if we stir up enough talk whatever it is that is bothering us will go away. We have begun to say more about the Holy Spirit, both in college lectureships and in journals, but the quality has not equaled the quantity. Those who have *really* studied the Holy Spirit, and especially those who have experienced Him, could hardly be impressed with the kindergarten stuff we have put out. The most daring proposition that our press and pulpit have set forth is that the Holy Spirit does indeed dwell personally within the Christian, which must strike serious students as naive. But even such bold affirmations as this, however elementary they may appear to others, are challenged by the Old Guard, who is pleased to dub them "the Holy Spirit boys."

But all this sounds more immature than it does hysterical. It is common for us to be immature, though we are definitely improving in this regard; but it is seldom that we are hysterical as we now are about the Holy Spirit movement. A case in point is when one of our prominent young ministers spoke at a college lectureship about the Holy Spirit. He testified to the "leading of the Spirit" in his own ministry in such a way that he shocked the powers that be. That very night, before the cock crowed, part of The Establishment met in the president's home to see to it that anybody who talked about the Holy Spirit in such a fashion be reckoned with. So the president summons the minister in question and strongly urges him to watch his words in his next presentation. This is hysteria. Even the Baptists,

as excited as they get over strange things said in their seminaries, would not behave like that!

We have had several cases of glossolalia in our congregations, and many more instances of unusual concern for the Holy Spirit. This has brought on a lot of talk and behavior that is frightening to our people. For some to speak of praying in the Holy Spirit, communing with the Holy Spirit, being guided by the Holy Spirit, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and witnessing or testifying in the Holy Spirit is indeed alarming to the majority and especially to the Establishment, who seem to fear something bad is going to come from it. Little consideration is given to the fact that these ideas might be scriptural and might actually strengthen the church rather than weaken it.

There have been several cases of withdrawal of fellowship. Others have been silenced, not being allowed even to ask questions in Bible classes. Pressures have been applied and reprisals have been enacted. One minister in dealing with one of the "Holy Spirit boys" referred to how the elders have authority to "lower the hammer" on such folk. They don't want any talk about the Holy Spirit except what has always been said. Those who indulge in questionable talk are soon marked and the word quickly spread. A home Bible discussion yielded interpretations about the Spirit's role in the life of the Christian that were somewhat off the beaten trail. It moved fast and far, and soon a college official was making inquiry of the meeting, requesting all names and details. This is hysteria.

Our colleges seem especially jittery about the slightest deviations about the Holy Spirit. Recently a college actually fired part of its faculty for such digressions. Two or three staff members were either speaking in tongues or were sympathetic with the viewpoint. To dismiss people for such reasons renews the very good question as to whether these colleges are church institutions or private concerns. If a man conducts his history or English courses efficiently, or even his Bible courses, why should the administration care if he can speak some ecstatic tongue, They should say to the students: "That should spice up his history lectures. Go take his course. He's different." But we have to get hysterical instead of historical!

Our nervous brethren forget that Paul himself spoke in tongues, and he even enjoined "Forbid not the speaking in tongues." And that is precisely what we try to do, forbid it. We have a fine way of zipping through the Bible and taking what we want or ignoring what we don't want, haven't we?

Even as I compose this piece a church bulletin comes to my desk from San Bernardino, edited by a good brother who is writing about the Holy Spirit. He says: "There seems to be a great deal of emotion attached to this issue and brethren seem to be unable to really discuss it dispassionately. And those who oppose the indwelling of the Holy Spirit seem to be the one's who are becoming the most passionate in their presentation." This confirms the point we are making.

The psychiatrists will have to explain our phobias about the Spirit. It may simply be our immaturity, which causes us to fear most any kind of change. It may be guilt complexes, which the Spirit seems especially to haunt or may be the antagonism of the flesh, which Paul assures us is ever at war with the Spirit.

But it disturbs me that our people should respond to the Spirit movement so unimaginatively, yea, so negatively.

If we are going to fear anyone, or get hysterical, it should concern the person who does *not* have the Spirit. After all, the Bible does say: "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9). It also says that God gives the Holy Spirit to those that obey Him (Acts 5:32).

My own experience with our "Holy Spirit boys" is that their experience has made them lovelier people. Such fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and goodness appears to be more abundant in their lives than in those who oppose them. Those who speak in tongues are usually quiet about their gift, choosing to reserve such a blessing for private devotions, as Paul seems to have preferred. They certainly do not want to cause any trouble and have no interest at all in dividing churches. The Spirit has made them gentle and peaceful. There is no reason to fear them.

It would make much more sense to withdraw from, censure, fire, mark, and avoid the brother who does *not* have the Holy Spirit. It was a woman who had an *evil* spirit in Acts 16 that annoyed Paul. As for those who had various gifts of the Spirit, including glossolalia, he was content to regulate them. Paul pressed no panic buttons.

Sometime back in my home a group of neighbors gathered for prayer and study. During prayer one dear woman broke forth in a tongue. Knowing something of the woman's background, I was not surprised, though somewhat startled to have such phenomenon in the privacy of my own home. I listened reverently as well as attentively. This was the closest that I have been to glossolalia. It sounded like a language of some kind, something like Hebrew, and was not mere mumbling. It was beautiful and melodious. Afterward it was explained to me that the Spirit may have revealed the interpretation of the tongue to another in the room who was too embarrassed to relate it. It was not I, I think.

However that may have been, I was aware that the rest of us were not edified by the tongue-uttered prayer, except as a rabbi's Hebraic chants might be edifying, or abstract art. But the good sister seems to have been edified, which was good enough for me. I had no reason to fear her. Perhaps it is a gift of the Spirit, so let it be a blessing to her. There is room for that kind of diversity in my view of the shared life. It didn't hurt me and may have helped her.

But you may ask me what my reaction would be if such a thing took place in a public assembly. Well, if it got out of order, I'd appeal to I Cor. 14 where love is postulated as the steadying influence for such behavior, and where the building up of the church is the right *motive.* I would urge this upon our tongue-speaking brethren, suggesting that they keep such manifestation at a minimum unless there is an interpretation to go with it—*so that always the church might be edified.*

But I would not forbid tongue-speaking since Paul says not to. And to the brother who gets excited about it all and wants to withdraw from somebody or fire somebody, or mark somebody, I would gently impress upon him that what he is witnessing is after all in the Bible. I know that it can't be among those things "that have come down to us today" since we don't practice it, but it is indeed in the Bible and not from some Hindu book of magic.

Like footwashing and fasting and other things. We take from the Bible what we want, and we panic when someone wants to take something that we don't want. We just must get the Lord's Supper into everyone's hands every Sunday, for which we have rather weak evidence, but we are ready to blow a fuse if someone proposes a footwashing ceremony, for which we have rather strong evidence.

Anyhow, hysteria and fuse-blowing are not fruits of the Spirit.

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Review of "Voices of Concern" . . . No. 3

By What Authority? James D. Bales

J. P. Sanders of *Voices of Concern*, not the J. P. Sanders of Pepperdine, has serious charges to make against those of us who have not followed him into modernism. He thinks that our message is irrelevant concerning the real issues of life; which are the social issues, as he views them. His view of the Bible, however, makes life itself irrelevant. If there is no certain standard, how can we know what is important, and what is unimportant; or whether anything is important?

Bible Antiquated?

Sanders destroys the tent of faith because he destroys the Bible. First, he claims that it is an evolutionary product; thus to go back to the first century church is to fossilize (p. 39). Second, the Bible has been so mutilated that there is no certainty as to its text (p. 40). However, with the characteristic intellectual arrogance of so many modernists, he can go past the mutilated, uncertain Bible and tell us what the real spirit of religion is. He thinks

that he represents this prophetic religion. Oftentimes modernists criticize the inspiration of the Bible, while assuming their own inspiration.

He condemns our attitude by saying: “Since the sect seeks to live by a document of two thousand years ago, which it interprets with great literalness, its look is also primarily retrospective.” (p. 45). The scriptural look is fourfold. First, backward, to the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Second, inward, to measure our lives by His word (2 Cor. 10:12. 13:5; I Thess. 5:21; 2 John 8). Third, outward, so that we shall walk circumspectly (Eph. 4:15-16); and also see the fields which are white unto harvest (John 4:35) . Fourth, forward, to Christ’s coming and the eternal state (Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28; 2 Pet. 3:13-14).

A failure on the part of some to take all four of these looks is not an argument against anyone of these looks. Although there are those who do not apply to their lives the precepts and principles of Jesus, this does not prove that we have outgrown the Bible. There are some who deal with problems of the past, and who ignore the problems of today. However, often times the problems of today are but new revivals of old errors and old challenges to the faith.

Why Be Concerned?

Sanders’ modernism destroys any real ground for faith in the Bible as God’s word. If we do not have an authoritative word from God, how does one know that it makes any real difference whether we are concerned for others. If there is no authoritative word from God, we cannot know whether we are men or monkeys. If we are just animals, with no assurance of life eternal, why foolishly try to live as if we were children of God? Sanders talked much about priestly religion and prophetic religion; but if the Bible is the confusion which he makes it to be, who knows whether either religion is from God; and whether one is preferable to another. If the Bible is a sea of uncertainty, he could not know if there is a “letter” or a “spirit,” or which is right. He could not know whether God is our Father or whether God is unconcerned.

There are some who assume that if you do not deal with social issues in the way they do, you are unconcerned about man. This is especially widespread among the socialist, and their kinsmen. For example, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the parent of the National Council, was organized with a basic objective of achieving socialism through religion (See my *Sketches from the History of Collectivism*, pp. 46-48). They fail to realize that socialism in itself is a reactionary form of government which tends to compound human misery and furnishes a fertile soil for sin. It is not a productive system; and to the extent socialism is achieved, to that extent a government becomes a dictatorship. The way some religious leaders today have manifested social concern has led

to lawlessness and anarchy; and this paves the way for dictatorship—under which people become irrelevant.

Irrelevances?

Sanders spoke of the problems of today, and said that "in all this the church must have something more to offer than dry-as-dust irrelevances about the form of baptism, frequency of the Supper, and church polity." (p. 45). First, our message to the world is not social relevancies as such, baptism as such, the Supper as such, the church as such, but the Lord Jesus Christ. However, when we accept His Lordship, we cannot be unconcerned about His word; nor consider as irrelevant that which He taught. Even tithing mint was right, under the law, but it did not substitute for the weightier matters (Matt. 23:23). Baptism is far more significant than tithing mint. But even of the tithing of mint, Jesus said they ought to have done it; but that they ought not to have left undone the weightier matters.

Second, we are to be judged by Christ and His word; so we should walk by His word in a life of trust in Him (John 12:48). Third, a considerable portion of the religious world today is confused concerning baptism, the organization of the church, and such like. It is important that they be instructed more perfectly in the way of the Lord in these matters. If Aquila and Priscilla had adopted Sanders' logic, they would have said that since Apollos has so many fine qualities, and knows so much about Christ, it is foolish to bother him with such a "trifle"—as viewed by Sanders—as the baptism of the great commission in contrast with the baptism of John (Acts 18:24-28). And surely Paul had not sat at the feet of Sanders, or he would not have been so "foolish" as to instruct and baptize some who had received the baptism of John (Acts 19:1-6). Fourth, there are multitudes of people who do not believe in Christ at all. It would be foolish for us to approach *them* with specifics concerning the Lord's supper, church organization, and baptism. What they first need to do is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; then as they acknowledge His Lordship they can be taught more of what He wants them to do.

In today's world we do need more teaching which leads people to believe in Christ; and to be well-grounded in their faith in Him. Fifth, "church polity" is not an irrelevant. Does Sanders think that it is immaterial that we are independent from such ecclesiastical control as is found in the Roman hierarchy? Sixth, it is right to discuss and learn what the Bible teaches on any and every subject; but it is not right to argue just for the sake of winning a point, and then living as if truth had no claim on our everyday life. We should become informed in order that we may better know and do the will of God. Seventh, it is wrong to spend all of our time on certain aspects of the Bible, while ignoring its demands, morally speaking, as to the way in which we should treat our fellowman.

Good Samaritan

Sanders contended that the priest represented priestly religion. The Samaritan represented the prophetic religion which was not concerned with the altar but with the "bleeding of needy men." "The priest was pious, orthodox, meticulous about proper details of doctrine and practice in his temple functions, but he passed by his neighbor's need . . . The one Jesus approved in the parable was the heretic, the despised Samaritan, who doubtless worshipped at the wrong temple in Samaria and who followed corrupted rituals at an illegitimate altar." (p. 46).

First, carefulness concerning the proper places, under the law, and the proper ritual were demanded by God; the same God who gave the decalogue (Ex. 20:24-26; I Kings 8:16, 19-21, 29; Lev. 10:1-2; Deut. 4:2, 40). Second, in the parable of the good Samaritan, the Lord was not dealing with the question of the place of worship, but the extent of love. When Christ dealt with the question of the Samaritan and worship, He made it clear that, although a change was coming, yet at this time (the time the law was in force) the Jews were right and the Samaritans were wrong. (John 4:20-22). Jesus did not say that one place and one worship was as good as another. This would have been to contradict His Father who had ordained the temple, and its ritual, for Jerusalem. If Sanders were writing the Bible, would he have included Jesus' statement that: "Ye worship which ye know not: We worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews." (John 4:22).

Furthermore, Jesus told His disciples, who were then under the law, that they were to obey the scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses' seat. (Matt. 23:1-3). Third, the priest was not really orthodox, for true orthodoxy included not merely the demands of the temple, but also the demands of mercy. Both had their place; and neither substituted for the other. Fourth, as far as I know there was no Samaritan temple on the mount. Fifth, in the parable of the good Samaritan Jesus taught a Jew the meaning of "love thy neighbor" by showing that his neighbor was the one in need whom he could help. They needed to realize, and so do we, that the issue is nor: Whom shall I love; but am I loving, If I am, it will manifest itself as there is opportunity. Being a Levite or priest did not exempt one from the demands of love. Simply going through religious forms would not substitute for being neighborly.

Sixth, Jesus was not contrasting a "Prophetic religion" with the Old Testament religion. He was showing how some had perverted and misunderstood at least a portion of the Old Testament teaching. If we miss love for God, for man, and for self, we have missed that on which all hangs. If we truly love, we shall be careful to try to do God's will in both the lesser and the weightier matters. One does not take such "chances," but if I had to take my chances with either one or the other, I had rather take my chances with this Samaritan than with the impious, unmerciful priest. But we should not think that we have to choose between the two. We ought to worship at the right "altar" and have the right spirit.

Matt. 25:31-46

"When Jesus talked about separating sheep from goats, he said not a word about sound doctrine, the true sect, or any of the other priestly conditions. On the contrary, he talked about social needs: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, ministering to the thirsty, the sick, imprisoned, and strangers." (p. 47).

First, it is a principle of Bible study that to understand a subject you may have to go to more than one passage. The Bible makes clear that Matt. 25:31-46 is not His total teaching concerning salvation and judgment. Second, if it is the total teaching, notice that not one word was said about the grace of God, the blood of Jesus, and faith in Christ. Several authors in *Voices*, including Sanders, claim that we are legalists, and that we do not sufficiently magnify God's grace. And yet, Sanders' comments would rule out faith and grace, and place salvation solely on the basis of one's works. This is legalism.

Third, the question of such works, however, will be raised in judgment. They must be performed in this life. It will be too late if we wait until judgment day. Fourth, it will not be sufficient to say: "Lord" as a substitute for doing good works. Fifth, think what powerful motivation factors there are to move us to do good works: (a) They are essential for salvation. (b) We are thereby serving Christ. How wonderful it would be, to be able to minister to Christ's needs! We can do it, but only through ministering to the needs of others. In this sense, Christ identifies himself with needy humanity; and their cry for help is His cry for help. How can we become indifferent and turn a deaf ear? Furthermore, let us remember that although this is not the total teaching of the Bible concerning judgment, it is an essential part of that teaching.

Matthew 23

Sanders pointed out that Jesus condemned "priestly religion" in Matt. 23. First, we too oppose Pharisaism. Second, how can Sanders be consistent and go back to a document about 2,000 years old? Third, why does he appeal to the very *letter* of what it says; as well as to its spirit? Fourth, since he thinks we have evolved beyond the Christianity of the first century, how does he know that this teaching is either authoritative or relevant? How does he know, unless he has some fixed standard, that the evolution of religion has not resulted in Phariseeism being the prophetic religion today? How does he know that things haven't so changed that God now approves Phariseeism? He cannot consistently go back 2,000 years ago and say it is wrong now because it was wrong then. He cannot say that we have a fixed and final revelation from God on the matter which shows that Phariseeism is wrong. He can't go back to a Bible, concerning which he is not certain that any verse is

correct, and say that he is *certain* that Phariseeism is wrong. Modernism leaves one on a boundless fog, without rudder or compass, and with no port toward which to sail.—*Harding College, Searcy, Ark.*

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REPLY TO PROFESSOR BALES

By J. P. Sanders

My good friend, J. D. Bales, has written for this paper a review of my little essay in *Voices of Concern.* Leroy Garrett invited me to respond.

I do so with considerable hesitation, doubting that it is in good taste for one who has left a denomination to turn and address himself to its people. However, the correspondence that has come to me as a result of the essay leads me to believe that there is a widespread restlessness and seeking of spirit to which I may conscientiously speak.

I certainly do not wish to get entangled in a continuing dialogue. I have no desire to persuade any to follow in my steps out of the group or to disturb anyone who is satisfied where he is. If my words can, though, speak with light or hope to any who are at this moment struggling as I struggled, these words come with every good wish.

It is clear that when J. D. and I speak, we are standing on different ground. This fact makes fruitful communication between us difficult. He appeals to the Scripture texts for proof—while it is this very use of Scripture which I hold needs to be proved as valid. For me, he proves by that which is to be proved. This was the basic point of my essay.

The passages which J. D. quotes in his review are, of course, familiar to me. I at one time used them in that manner and in that reference myself. My change came, not because of a different interpretation of the passages but because of a growing conviction that the Bible is not to be used in that manner at all. Thus the real disagreement between us is on the doctrine of the Word itself. What is the nature of the Bible and what is its legitimate use? All else is on the periphery. With disagreement on this, discussion is like two men trying to agree on the definition of a word while they appeal to different dictionaries.

When I look at the Bible, I see sixty-six books of unequal value. They were written over a period of many centuries by many men with many different viewpoints, philosophies, and problems. None of the writers was consciously writing Scripture. Each wrote for his time and place and for his own purpose. The reverence toward the writings and their authority came much later.

In the Bible I see some exquisitely lovely religious lyrics, some repugnant nationalistic verse, some incomparably beautiful erotic poetry, some profound mythology, some colorful and at times amusing folk lore, some legends and fables, some great rules for community life in an ancient society, some tiresome regulations of ritual and diet, some dazzling—if schizophrenic—visions, some dull didacticism, some dynamic and moving preaching. Nowhere—nowhere—do I find a consistent diagram or blueprint of what life should be or what the church should be. I see in it man's sorrow and anguish, his despair and hope, his loving and living, his hating and dying—but I do not find a schematic program of salvation.

When Paul wrote a letter, he evidently wrote as we would write—to certain persons about certain questions. He wrote about eating meat offered to idols, about cutting hair and shaving the head, about letting women speak in the church, and many other matters that were then vital but which have no relevance now and have not had for centuries. With intelligence and conviction Paul moved in on the problems at hand. If he had confronted other problems, our New Testament would have been different. If he had been writing a century later or a century earlier, our New Testament would have been different. It appears to me that our task is to approach our problems in our time with his same intelligence and conviction but not with his first-century answers.

Trying to put the diverse and unrelated materials of the Bible books into a unified system is, it seems to me, futile. It is like gathering up scattered pieces of several jigsaw puzzles with the hope of making one coherent pattern of them.

This is indicated in the fact that Fundamentalists, all of whom hold that the Bible contains an exact pattern given by supernatural revelation, cannot agree among themselves what that pattern is. Each group picks up the pieces, but no two groups put them together in the same manner. The supernatural should do better than that.

If the Bible was given to man from the outside as a perfect pattern, why was its way not spelled out in clear, unmistakable one-two-three order?

The church lived from several centuries with no Christian Scriptures to guide her. One church had a letter, another church had another. Eventually Paul's letters got bound together in one corpus, but even then there was considerable controversy and much scholarly disputing as to which writings were actually from the great man. Even today we are not sure of some of them. It was not until the fourth century that the New Testament as we know it—twenty-seven books, no more, no less—was accepted as the rule. Some of the books that finally made it had a hard time—such as 2 Thessalonians, 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation. There were some other books in high repute in the early centuries that did not make it in the end, such as the Shepherd of Hermas. We now list such books as apocryphal, but the early church used many of them alongside the ones we call canonical

and even above some of those now in the canon. All of which is to say: where was the pattern for that early church?

At least one of Paul's letters is lost to us as mentioned in I Corinthians. What if some vital part of "the pattern" was contained in that lost piece?

Actually, any religion which lives accumulates a literature. It is inevitable that it should be so. Sooner or later in any religion one of its believers with a flair for poetry will sing of his faith in that form; some other believer with a skill in narration will tell the stories of the faith or put its teachings into myths and parables or write its history; some legal mind will codify and legalize its doctrines; and preachers will preach their sermons. After centuries this writing becomes quite a collection. The best and most authentic pieces will be used again and again and will gather the force of authority as expressive of the orthodox faith; those pieces of less value will gradually drop away into an apocrypha.

Human nature being what it is, a religion will take its own literature and exalt it as unique, special. It is then only a short step to saying it is from God and has his authority.

Why can we not celebrate the Bible simply for the magnificent literature and wisdom that it is? Even as the sun shines, as rivers flow, as birds fly—so do men write of their dismay and hope. All these things are, I think, of God. Why must we make the Bible something supernatural? It seems to me that the natural and the human are as much of God as the supernatural and the miraculous.

The Bible, like all other sacred literature, comes to us rich with man's experience of living and loving, of hating and hoping, and dying. It is filled with his ignorance, his frailty, his wonder, and his splendor. It is great because it is so human. It speaks to me as an existing individual because it is the language by which others described how life looked to them where they lived it.

The writer of I John caught it, I think, when he pointed out that "No man has seen God at any time." Yet he has hope of knowing the divine, because he says "He who loves is born of God and knows God." Now love is between human beings, it is a natural and human thing. This poet seems to be saying that God is really known only in the ordinary, the human, the everyday. Since we cannot see God "out there"—and I agree with this writer—we must see him "in here" where we live our lives with each other. The word became flesh-in-deed it always becomes flesh when men love one another. Our true spiritual worship is to present our bodies to each other and for each other in living sacrifice in our common life.

Jesus saw this, too, when he said the divine king would say "Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me." Here the divine was found unexpectedly in the midst of the human. The unseen which cannot be seen must be found in the things that are seen. Revelation of the divine was not in a supernatural miracle or sudden

overwhelming of the natural order but rather in the hungry face of a man needing to be fed.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name," said Jesus, "I will be in their midst." Gathered together for what? We have usually assumed "gathered together for worship," but he did not say so. We might be gathered together two or three for lunch or for work or for planning or for play. When we honestly open our lives to each other in love and concern, this, I think, is in his name who lived so—at such times of being truly present to each other—he is in our midst. His presence again is not in the supernatural and extraordinary but in the common and the natural. Bonhoeffer caught it in a happy phrase when he called God the "Beyond in the midst of our lives."

This Beyond in the midst of our lives is the divine within the human, the holy within the profane, the word in the flesh—and so is the Eternal revealed. Why cannot the Bible—in all its warm humanity—be such a revelation?

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DISHONEST NAME-DROPPING

By Robert Meyers

When the Quaker folk have a "concern," they feel compelled to speak or act. I am not a Quaker, but I do have a "concern"—a very deep and grave one. It has to do with a form of dishonesty which is spreading rapidly throughout the largest segment of the Church of Christ brotherhood.

Not long ago I heard a friend speak on the subject of archaeology. His thesis for several nights was that this science confirms our belief in the veracity of the Bible. He cited many examples of the ways in which scholarly diggings had thrown light upon some Biblical text, or indicated that the Bible record was more reliable then some scholars had thought.

So far, so good. The disturbing thing for me was the general impression left with the audience by my friend's manipulation of his material. He spoke often of his own former teacher, the renowned William Foxwell Albright, and stressed that Dr. Albright has now reached a "more conservative position" with reference to Bible accuracy. By wording his comments carefully, my friend left the impression that the Church of Christ approach to the Old Testament is now being vindicated by such men as Albright.

I sat in the auditorium acutely uncomfortable, thinking how distressed the audience of orthodox Church of Christ folk would be if they really knew the views of the man being quoted to them. Far from supporting their fundamentalist approach to Scripture, he is by their definition a flaming liberal whom they would discredit immediately. They would

have rejoiced not at all over his corroborations of certain Biblical names and events; instead, they would have been upset that so radical a scholar was being used at all.

This seems to me a most reprehensible form of intellectual dishonesty. It is a form of cheating and insulting audiences. They are cheated because they do not learn how much such great international authorities disagree with them, and they are insulted because the speaker counts on the fact that they will never bother to read the technical works he quotes from. He knows that they will complacently accept his words to mean that here is one more proof of man's capacity for reaching the truth (i.e., Church of Christ viewpoints) if he studies long enough.

This pattern, this exploitation of authority, this name-dropping is steadily increasing in the mainstream segment of the Churches of Christ as it sends its young men off to sit under scholars with worldwide reputations. Since we have no such men, and are not likely to have any under our present system, we are forced to make use of famed scholars in order to produce Ph.D.'s for college accreditation purposes. We make much in our college literature of our young Ph.D.'s who have studied under such men, and we tacitly encourage them to become name-droppers who exploit among congregations the reputations of their scholarly teachers and by cautious speech permit those audiences to go away thinking that these scholars support Church of Christ literalism in reading the Bible.

Frankly, I prefer an out-and-out anti-intellectualism to this despicable form of slick cheating. It seems more honest to be on Reuel Lemmons' side and bemoan *any* formal education that is non-party. This, at least, gives us a degree of consistency. If we do not read ourselves, and intend to pay no real attention to those who do, our best bet is to proclaim that formal education ruins gospel preachers and that the world's famed scholars are betrayed by their worldly wisdom and lost.

But when we send our young men off to be specialists and then hire the specialists to come back and *tell us only those things which they know we want to hear,* we are cheating ourselves terribly. And we are doing something far worse that that: we are feeding our complacency.

Our brotherhood needs several things, but heaven knows it does not need any more complacency. It is already so smug in many areas as hardly to know the rest of the religious world exists. To hire a man to come in and select very carefully the right food for feeding that arrogance is dangerous, even for the man who does the feeding. For the complacent arrogance he thus nourishes may one day turn and rend him if he should ever dare to deviate, or reveal too much about his own secret sympathies.

I observed the audience carefully and I think I am not mistaken about what my friend did for them. He bandied great names to impress those present with the idea that the Church of Christ is now touching elbows with the scholarly great—and the audience, hungry for scholarly esteem which proves the Church of Christ was right all along, ate it

up. He told them how men like Albright and Nelson Glueck were voicing "more conservative points of view," and by saying no more than that left the impression that both men would have felt quite at home in the Church of Christ building that night.

It is true that Albright and Glueck are more conservative about some matters than they once were, but the comment means nothing unless one knows how liberal they once were and how liberal they still are. The truth is that both men are so liberal by Church of Christ standards that the joyously complacent atmosphere created that night would have been rudely shattered had the facts about the two been known. If my friend had told the audience that Albright does not believe in verbal inspiration, in the infallibility of the Scriptural record, or in a literal reading of the creation story, they would have been so shocked that they would have closed their ears to the rather minor archaeological confirmations of events, place names, and locations.

I am aware that it is not necessary to tell an audience everything an authority believes when one is quoting him to support a specific point. But when one constantly speaks of how "conservative" such a man has become, and when that word is known to have certain connotations in the Church of Christ, it is dishonest not to let the audience know at some point how far removed from their ideological world the man is. Some of us who were present had been publicly excommunicated as liberals several years before, yet we sat in an audience basking in self-congratulations because of the implied approval of a man far more liberal than any of us!

I could not help wondering what the reaction from the audience would have been if I had risen with my copy of Albright's *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (often quoted from during the lectures) and read something like this:

"The situation can be explained satisfactorily throughout if we suppose that the story of creation in Genesis 2, the story of Eden, the accounts of the antediluvian patriarchs, the Flood-story, and the story of the Tower of Babel were all brought from north-western Mesopotamia to the West by the Hebrews before the middle of the second millennium" (p. 238).

My present readers are aware of what Albright intends to imply when he keeps using the word "story," I am sure. And they see that this little extract suggests what other passages in Albright explicitly say, that the Hebrews adapted mythologies from other cultures and transported them when they came to their Palestinian home.

I went home after my friend's lecture and browsed through Albright for a while. Here are some of his views: that the patriarchal stories in Genesis are essentially but not entirely accurate (the "essentially" is the mark of his new conservatism!); that the books of the Old Testament were edited and reedited, with many changes coming into them; that the numbers used in the Old Testament are often unreliable; that monotheism was a product of gradual evolution; that Moses did not author the Pentateuch and that the documentary

hypothesis is *essentially* a plausible explanation of their origin; that there are conflicts in different versions of the same story; that Moses is to be viewed as the "founder of Yahwism," and so on, ad infinitum.

I have before me as I write the page numbers which substantiate every comment made above about Albright's views. Yet if the audience had had any inkling that Albright felt so, they would have lost their happy assurance that even the greatest scholars eventually come over to our side and would have chided my friend for making use of the man.

Had there been a question period, one might have risen and tumbled the whole flimsy house of straw with one simple interrogation:

"Please tell the audience whether Prof. Albright believes that God literally made man as Genesis 1 says He did."

The answer would have stunned the crowd and ruined the partisan spell being cast over them. Only one contingency could have been more electrifying: that is, if Prof. Albright had walked in and sat down to hear the use being made of him by his former student.

It is difficult to believe that the mainstream Church of Christ folk really want a priesthood that screens what they can know and carefully makes no mention of what might disturb their complacency. Yet there are moments when one feels there is no alternative.

I have not been more specific about names and places because I am interested not in personalities but in general tendencies. My friend is a good man who is not conscious of involvement in the practice I am indicting. What I am calling intellectual cheating he would rationalize to his complete satisfaction. But I plead with him, and all like him, to stop *exploiting* scholarship for party reasons. It is not fair to brandish quotes triumphantly when they agree with us, and hide them discreetly (and dishonestly) behind our backs when we think of those enormous areas in which they disagree with us profoundly.

If such men as my friend do not start being more open with audiences, and getting them ready for increasing numbers of graduate students in the pulpits, there will soon be a chasm between scholars and non-scholars in the Church of Christ which will ruin us. We must bridge the gap by being honest about what scholars really believe, and we must occasionally indicate with humility that these men are not fools who have come to such different conclusions from our own. Only so can we lay hold on humility and be saved from that damning arrogance which supposes that only ignorant or insincere men could possible differ from us.—*Friends University, Wichita, Kan.*

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Things That Matter Most. . . No.3

THE STRENGTH OF WEAKNESS

The point of this article is illustrated in the utter helplessness of a newly born infant. He is the very epitome of weakness. For many months he is wholly dependent on others for his existence. Most animals can shift for themselves only a few hours after birth, and nearly all of them are able to sustain themselves after the first few days. But not man.

Such a humble beginning should get man off to a right start, ever causing him to realize his dependence on others for life itself, and ever conscious of the providential care of a power beyond all men. But men grow proud and forget, and come to believe too much in their own resources. They despise weakness and esteem strength—their own strength. Herein lies tragedy.

There is a precious truth in the fact that an infant's strength lies in his weakness. Without the ability even to turn over on his side without someone's help, he is soon the commander-in-chief of the entire household. Unable even to speak a word concerning his most basic needs, he has everyone around him scurrying about in response to his beck and call. He assumes the throne even when he cannot lift a little finger. And he does not have to be considerate of others in issuing his directives, for when he speaks they jump, whether out of bed or out of a comfortable chair.

It is one of life's strange contradictions that there is strength in weakness just as there is wisdom in ignorance, and the Bible speaks of both.

Surely one of the great neglected truths of the Bible is that the Lord's power is made perfect in weakness: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). This is why Paul goes on to say: "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities: for when I am weak, then I am strong." While nearly all of us are eager to demonstrate strength, the apostle told the Corinthians: "I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power" (1 Cor. 2:3-4).

Paul is not monastic or ascetic in his talk about weakness. So thrilled was he over the grace of God that he could never believe that through self-inflicted bodily suffering he could attain forgiveness. The weakness that he refers to is given to him of the Lord—"a thorn in the flesh" is the name he gives it. He no longer prays that the Lord will take it away, for now he sees that God's power is made perfect in weakness. Now he is pleased to be weak, for in his weakness the power of God can be demonstrated.

The Bible sees this true of that "great cloud of witnesses" that surround the Church of Christ, for they "conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, *won strength out of weakness. . .* " (Heb. 11:34)

When I *am weak, then I am strong! They won strength out of weakness!* This is so contrary to the worldly philosophy that measures strength in terms of real estate, bank accounts, and reputation—a viewpoint that prevails even in the church. The Christians and churches are few who welcome weakness so that God's strength can boldly be manifest in them. We seek a self-sufficiency that tends to rise above any special need of God. Our strength is our own. We want to swell the ranks to an impressive number, not reduce the ranks as God did Gideon's army. When God says "You have too many," He is telling us that He wants to make a minority a majority by taking His stand with us.

The great moments in history are God's use of weak, ignorant men, not strong, wise ones. Moses couldn't talk. Jeremiah was but a youth. Gideon was the poorest of the poor. And they all gave these weaknesses as excuses, but God made them strong in their weakness. So with the apostles. They were insignificant fishermen who smelled of fish, but the word they proclaimed traveled to the ends of the earth.

"God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God" (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

God cannot make much use of any man who supposes he is wise or strong, for whatever God would do through him would only enhance the man's own self-esteem. So God shames the wise and strong, as he did Pharaoh. God cannot use to His glory that which man idolizes, for then the idol would be honored all the more. So God chooses what is low and despised through which to do His mighty work, as he did with a farm hard, the prophet Amos.

Paul says that it was in the wisdom of God that the world did not know God *through wisdom.* God so arranged things that the world would know Him *through faith* or not at all. For this reason the Christ was a stumbling-block to the Jews and folly to Gentiles. The Jews expected God to act according to the traditions of Judaism, while the Greeks would insist that He reveal Himself according to the wisdom of the philosophers. God did it differently: "It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

And so Paul could write one of the most unusual of all Biblical truths: "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25) . He is saying that God's power is made perfect in weakness, that it is only as men humble themselves before the old rugged cross, so despised by carnal wisdom, that they can be made whole.

Paul gives the *why* of all this when he says "so that no human being might boast in the presence of God." God has shown caution all through history to make sure that man's pride is given no incentive. Paul points out that God did not call many who were wise and powerful by worldly standards. The gospel pours contempt on human pride.

It is remarkable that the God of heaven should bypass the mighty peoples of earth and choose the lowly Jews as the vehicle for His purposes. The Greeks and Romans were impressive people, but it pleased God to select the most unimpressive. While he did make use of the Greeks and Romans, it was in ways that could hardly feed man's pride. The Greeks supplied the language that would couch the gospel message, but it was the common tongue of the man on the street, not that of Plato and Euripedes. And the Romans he used as road-builders and protectors so that the lowly Jew could carry the gospel to the world.

The Messiah could have been born of an Egyptian queen, but it was an obscure Jewish peasant girl instead. He could have slept in the bed of a prince, marked with a royal coat of arms, but He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger alongside cattle. The apostles could have been merchants, bankers, and philosophers, but they were ignorant and unlearned men. Even the Messiah's forerunner came from the wilderness, dressed rudely and behaving strangely.

There was nothing to attract man's pride. There still isn't if the gospel is truly presented. When the church turns to an educated clergy, pretentious edifices, and impressive budgets it may feed man's vanity more than his hungry soul. We may be much too far from the simplicity of "the church that is in thy house." God cannot do much through a strong and affluent church, unless like Paul it is content to become weak; but look what He did with the poor, struggling church in Thessalonica.

It is as newborn babes, and not as self-sufficient giants, that we are to seek the sincere milk of the word, Peter assures us. Like the Christ who is our example, we are to seek perfection through weakness. Isaiah says of Him: "He poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors," and because He chose to be weak, the prophet says that God will make Him strong (Isa. 53:12-13). God can use us only when we are weak, for it is only in our weakness that His power can be made perfect.

"Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practice kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord." (Jer. 9:23-24)—*the Editor*

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BOOK NOTES

We repeat the offer made last month: a copy of *Voices of Concern* and a subscription to this journal for a friend, or a renewal for yourself, for only $4.00. Now that we have a review of this controversial book on a monthly basis, you will want a copy of your own. Alone the book is 3.50.

Two paperbacks by Joseph Fletcher we especially recommend as stimulants to more maturity in ethical thinking. *Situation Ethics* (1.95) argues that love is the only moral absolute and that its application depends on the situation. *Moral Responsibility* (1.95) is situation ethics at work, with discussions on euthanasia, birth control, sex, wealth, etc.

Interpreting the Beatitudes is a provocative little volume that asks questions like *Did Jesus intend the beatitudes only for His disciples?* and *Can we get back to Jesus?* Irvin W. Batdorf discusses beatitudes in reference to the Old Testament and even the Dead Sea Scrolls. Only 2.25 in paperback.

This Jesus, a new book by D. T. Niles is about the Christian's witness to Jesus and is ideal for devotional reading. The chapters on "The Foolishness of God" and "The Smallness of God" will set you to thinking. Only 1.25 in paperback.

How William Barclay gets so much writing done I will never know. When I visited him in Glasgow in 1963 he told me that he could remember nearly everything he reads and where he reads it, which must help a lot. His latest is *The First Three Gospels*, which tells the Story of the formation of these books. He discusses the so-called Synoptic Problem, explains why the books are similar, and traces their sources. Though the material is heavy, it is written with Barclay's lucid style. Over 300 pages, but still only 2.65 in paperback.

Religion in Contemporary Debate by Alan Richardson discusses the lively issues now being debated in religious circles. You'll profit by this able man's evaluation of such questions as whether the Bible is to be taken literally, ought we expect to prove the existence of God, why do some theologians favor a kind of religious atheism. 2.75 in paperback.

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